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H. CON. RES. 128

Expressing the sense of Congress that Africa is of significant strategic, political, economic, and humanitarian importance to the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 18, 2009

Mr. RUSH (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CLAY, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. CAO, and Mr. ROYCE) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that Africa is of significant strategic, political, economic, and humanitarian importance to the United States.

Whereas contemporary United States ties with Sub-Saharan Africa today far transcend the humanitarian interests that have frequently underpinned United States engagement with the continent;

Whereas Africa now plays an increasingly significant role in meeting the world's energy needs, supplying new and old technologies with vital mineral resources, and countering the transnational threats of terrorism, piracy, global health crises, and trafficking in illegal narcotics and persons;

Whereas there is a growing understanding in foreign policy circles that economic development, natural resource management, human security, and global stability are inextricably linked;

Whereas Freedom House concluded this year that 19 African countries are electoral democracies and asserted that these include “some of the most promising examples of new democracies in the world—places where leaders who came to power through fair and competitive elections provide real opportunities for their citizens to live in freedom”;

Whereas the United States Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has entered into 11 compacts with African countries, worth nearly \$4.5 billion, reflecting these countries’ commitment to policies that promote political and economic freedom, investments in education and health, the sustainable use of natural resources, control of corruption, and respect for civil liberties and the rule of law;

Whereas African economies are among the fastest growing globally and registered nearly 6 percent overall economic growth in 2007, the highest in 20 years;

Whereas there are now 40 sub-Saharan African countries eligible for trade benefits under the United States African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the highest number ever;

Whereas United States exports to Sub-Saharan Africa totaled \$14.4 billion in 2007, an amount more than double that of 2001, while United States total imports from sub-Saharan Africa more than tripled during this period, to \$67.4 billion;

Whereas United States firms are a leading provider of foreign direct investment to Sub-Saharan Africa, investing \$13.8 billion by year-end 2006;

Whereas the United States Government and private sector jointly promote Africa's economic development, United States trade with the region, and United States-Africa business partnerships;

Whereas African states have collectively adopted the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a self-imposed framework for socio-economic development that aims to improve governance and promote friendlier ties among states;

Whereas oil from North and Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for over 19.5 percent of United States oil imports in 2008, a greater share than oil from Persian Gulf countries;

Whereas the proportion of United States oil imports from Africa is expected to grow to 25 percent over the next decade;

Whereas Africa's natural resources, if carefully managed, will contribute to global prosperity and expand economic growth in Africa;

Whereas the creation of a United States military Africa Command in 2007 reflects Africa's long-term strategic value and strives for a more coherent, coordinated, and effective United States Africa policy;

Whereas the territorial waters of the Horn of Africa are a zone of international strategic importance because a large proportion of global energy supplies and commercial shipping pass through them, necessitating increased United

States cooperation with African countries to improve border and coastal security;

Whereas United States military cooperation with Africa is growing, with United States and African forces routinely conducting joint exercises;

Whereas African governments are steadily taking a larger role in the provision of security and peacekeeping on the continent, due in part to United States security assistance and training;

Whereas over 300 million Muslims live in Africa, where they enjoy a long history of tolerance and inter-faith cooperation, making Africa an ideal place for the United States to foster and expand its relationship with the Islamic world;

Whereas Africa's growing importance is reflected in the intensifying efforts of China, Russia, India, Iran, and other countries to gain access to African resources and advance their ties to the region; and

Whereas a more comprehensive, multi-faceted regional policy is essential for the United States to operate effectively in this increasingly competitive environment: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring),* That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) Africa is of significant strategic, political,
 4 economic, and humanitarian importance to the
 5 United States; and

6 (2) the United States should vigorously pursue
 7 the formation and implementation of an integrated

1 policy framework to advance economic development
2 and trade relations with African nations and to fos-
3 ter strategic, political, economic, humanitarian, and
4 cultural ties of mutual benefit to the United States
5 and Africa.

